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January 31, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

In anticipation of your upcoming trip to China during which time you are expected to meet with leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), I want to express my sincere hope and expectation that you will use this trip as an opportunity to condemn the CCP's egregious human rights violations in the strongest possible terms. While numerous matters of concern to the United States deserve your attention and discussion on the trip—including PRC procurements of Iranian petroleum products, China's support for Russia in its war against Ukraine, and CCP harassment of political dissidents on American soil—I ask that you make defending the oppressed a defining focus of your trip.

Human rights abuses should never be tolerated, yet China continues to commit genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, including through the use of forced labor camps where previous detainees have reported widespread violence, torture, rape, and mass sterilization. As international bodies like the UN Human Rights Council refuse to investigate these atrocities, we are urging you to hold the CCP accountable and publicly advocate for the rights of all Chinese during your visit.

China's suppression of human rights against the broader population of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was once again on display in November, when the world watched as peaceful protesters who opposed President Xi Jinping's authoritarian policies were met with heavy intimidation by the Chinese government. In the same way that the CCP used intimidation tactics against peaceful protestors, Chinese police continue to operate overseas in an effort to harass and intimidate dissidents through constant surveillance. Chinese citizens are barred from expressing their freedom of speech and religion if it doesn't fall in line with the Chinese Communist Party's doctrine, with consequences amounting to censorship, detainment, or violence. The CCP also continues to violate the fundamental rights of Hong Kong residents through its implementation of the National Security Law and ongoing erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy.

Moreover, China has repeatedly demonstrated systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom as defined in the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). While the State Department has recognized China as a Country of Particular Concern, more must be done in confronting these human rights violations. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has also documented routine government raids on churches, destruction of Buddhist religious sites, unwarranted detention of religious leaders including Catholic bishops, and the confiscation of religious materials. Continuing to enforce Article 300 of China's Criminal Law, China severely curtails the religious practices and

expression of minority religions including the Falun Gong and Church of Almighty God. The CCP remains one of the most aggressive threats to religious practitioners both within their borders and beyond.

Chinese officials who not only direct these kinds of heinous policies, but those who also idly stand by, should be held fully accountable. In your discussions with Foreign Minister Qin Gang, we urge you to denounce China's human rights abuses on all citizens at home or abroad. When anyone is deprived of their unalienable rights and dignities, American leadership is required to stand for what is right.

In the midst of China's ongoing barbaric acts of aggression against its own people, now is not the time to look the other way. While recognizing that numerous aspects of the US-China relationship will be discussed during your visit—including opportunities for cooperation between our nations in areas of aligned interest—I urge you to not pursue such cooperation at the expense of addressing these serious human rights concerns. As a leader on the world stage, the United States must stand up for the rights of all people.

In God We Trust,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Lankford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

James Lankford
United States Senator